Reducing Barriers to Engaged Fatherhood: Three Principles for Promoting Gender Equity in Parenting

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1 Purpose

It has been our collective endeavor through this volume to motivate broader and more coordinated action to reduce the barriers to engaged fatherhood. The diverse contributors to this book came together out of a shared recognition that important work on fatherhood was being done largely in parallel in our respective fields with only modest cross-fertilization. Most of the scholarly leaders on fatherhood engagement through social policy have been in Europe at the cutting edge of progressive family leave (cf. Petts et al. 2020). Many of the frontrunning medical scientists advocating for fatherhood engagement, particularly in Maternal Child Health (MCH) and Pediatrics, have been leading their charge from Australia, Great Britain, and the United States. Organizational scholars who study working fathers are thinly scattered around the globe and have only recently begun to shape mainstream scholarship on gender, work, and organizations. This book makes a valuable contribution by providing readers with a cross-national and cross-disciplinary

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perspective on fatherhood, which, in compilation, produces a richer picture and deeper insights than could be gained from the disconnected sum of its parts. We hope that readers share our experience of seeing the landscape of fatherhood engagement anew from this novel vantage point.

Our aim in this concluding chapter is to illuminate three working principles that emerged from insights gained at the Experts Meeting on Fatherhood and that became more crystalized in the editing of this volume. As we will elaborate, our three working principles relate to (1) creating individual, non-transferable parenting resources explicitly for fathers, (2) reducing economic conflicts between breadwinning and caregiving, and (3) building supportive social networks for engaged fatherhood. We offer these working principles as a preliminary framework for transcending and empowering efforts to support and promote engaged fatherhood within and across the social policy, organizational work, and healthcare fields. We then propose next steps in this work agenda to expand our scope and community of collaborators.

2 Why Promote Engaged Fatherhood?

In our cross-disciplinary conversations, three distinct, if complementary, arguments arose for promoting engaged fatherhood. By “engaged fatherhood,” we are referring to involved parenting by biological and/or socially identified “fathers” in terms of direct caregiving (“engagement”), availability to a child (“accessibility”), and “responsibility” for meeting a child’s needs (Lamb et al. 1985). The first argument is based on straightforward advocacy for the wellbeing of men. Gendered cultural norms and institutionalized practices of work and healthcare constrain fathers from participating in the human developmental benefits and joys of being an engaged parent. This is a central theme in the chapter by Kotelchuck on the “Impact of Fatherhood on Men’s Health and Development” and the inspiration for the chapter by Macht on the “Role of Love and Children’s Agency in Improving Fathers’ Wellbeing.”

A second argument stems from an interest in the welfare of families and the demonstrable advantages to children of a parent-rich start to life (O’Brien 2009). As explained in the opening chapters of this volume by Yogman and Eppel and by Kotelchuck, there is now overwhelming evidence showing that engaged fatherhood has meaningful implications for the health and welfare of families, including for mothers’, fathers’, and children’s physical, mental, and relational wellbeing. From a child development perspective, fatherhood engagement is associated with a breadth of important outcomes—ranging from decreased infant mortality to heightened parental attachment, reductions in child abuse and behavior problems, and increased cognitive test scores (see also, Guterman et al. 2009; Huerta et al. 2013; Nandi et al. 2018; Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel 2007; Paxson and Waldfogel 1999; Petts et al. 2020).

Finally, overcoming the barriers to engaged fatherhood is fundamental to achieving gender equality. The industrial revolution reified the public and private spheres

of human labor by institutionalizing the separation of work for pay from care of home and family (Goldscheider et al. 2015). Efforts to promote gender equality have largely focused on increasing women's access to and status in the male-dominated public sphere. Over the past 50 years, a "quiet revolution" has occurred in women's expectations of and participation in paid labor (Goldin 2006). However, this gender revolution is widely perceived to be stalled (England 2010), primarily because women's occupational and earning potential remain anchored down by the challenges of integrating labor in the public and private realms and by the intransigent archetypes of men as "breadwinners" and women as "caregivers" (Brighouse and Wright 2008; Goldin 2014; Morgan 2002; Ridgeway 2011).

2.1 *Stalled Revolution*

The gendered division of labor in the United States is illustrative of this one-sided progress. Even among married-couple families with children, a majority now have mothers who work for pay (69% in 2019) (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). In one of three married or cohabiting couples in the United States, women bring in half or more of household earnings—a three-fold increase between 1980 and 2017 (Parker and Stepler 2017). In spite of the fact that comparable proportions of U.S. fathers (48%) and mothers (52%) of children under 18 report that they would rather stay home with their kids if they did not need to work for pay (Parker and Wang 2013; see also Harrington's chapter), fewer than 1 in 15 dads are "stay-at-home" parents as compared to more than 1 in 4 moms (Livingston 2018). Fathers' propensity to work full time tends to be unaffected by the age of their children, whereas mothers' likelihood of working full time declines with the arrival of infants and increases gradually once children reach school age (e.g., U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020) (see also, Bianchi 2011; Bianchi et al. 2006; Goldin and Mitchell 2017).

Increasing women's access to higher levels of pay and authority in the public realm is necessary, but insufficient, to achieve gender equality. As Goldscheider et al. (2015) have argued, the "second half of the gender revolution" is about *both* "strengthening countries' economies, as women join their skills and energies to men's in the marketplace" and "strengthening families, as men increasingly take on important roles in the home" (p. 231). Toward these dual aspirations of strengthening economic and familial welfare, we advocate for overcoming barriers to engaged fatherhood, as well as for loosening the practical and perceived incompatibility of labor in the public and private realms.

We consciously argue for promoting "gender equity" as opposed to "gender equality" in parenting because we believe that, at this point in history, gender-differential interventions are required (i.e., "equity") to make progress toward the ideal of "equality"—that is, the point at which all people would be free to define and pursue their work aspirations and "caregiving ambitions" (Bear 2019) unconstrained by gender bias (Pavlic et al. 2000). It is also sensible to consider the differential

needs and contributions of fathers and mothers because the perinatal period (i.e., immediately preceding and following the birth of a child) is a time of life in which distinctions of biological sex and socially constructed gender are maximally heightened (Doucet 2009). In the healthcare system, the perinatal period is commonly exclusively dedicated to maternal and infant care (see chapters by Kotelchuck, Levy and Kotelchuck, and Simon and Garfield in this volume). As explained by Koslowski and O'Brien in this volume, family leave policies were also originally conceived as exclusive protections for female workers before and after childbirth. More than a half century passed between the International Labor Organization's standard-setting Maternity Protection Convention in 1919 and Sweden's pathbreaking decision in 1974 to give fathers access to parental leave. In 1993, Norway was the first country to introduce a period of parental leave specifically dedicated to fathers, with the objective, as Kvande explains in her chapter, "to send a strong signal to parents as well as employers that men as well as women are parents with obligations and rights as caregivers" (insert page).

In sum, men's engagement in fatherhood is core to the gender revolution. The march toward gender equality will not progress without transforming the gender segregation of household labor and mitigating the incompatibilities between paid labor and familial care. "Gender equality" and "family values" are mantras commonly pitted against one another, but they are actually mutually reinforcing—particularly if one conceives of "gender" and "family" in inclusive terms. Engaged fatherhood is a strategy for gender equality that is good for the welfare of men, their children, and familial partners.

3 Unresolved Tensions in Fathers' Roles as "Breadwinners" and "Caregivers"

Over the past 30 years, the message that "fathers are caregivers" has continued to spread and take root in cultures worldwide, though broad variation persists in practice, in terms of time invested and types of involvement (Altintas and Sullivan 2017; Coleman, Garfield, and Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health 2004; Jeong et al. 2016). Within this book, some of this variation is illustrated by Bosch and Las Heras's chapter on fathers' participation in family life across Latin America and by the "traditional," "conflicted," and "egalitarian" types of fathers that emerged from surveys of U.S. managers and professionals reported on in Harrington's chapter. There is a wealth of vivid quotes from fathers in Kvande's chapter on the case of Norway; in Bueno and Oh's comparative analysis of the perspectives of working fathers in Korea, Spain, and the United States; in Borgkvist's exploration of masculinity and fatherhood in Australia; in Tanquerel's conversations with French professional and working-class fathers; and in Macht's accounts of fatherly love in Scotland and Romania. In the text box, the selected

quotes from these chapters illustrate varying degrees of tension between “father as breadwinner” and “father as caregiver.”

Selected Quotes from Fathers across Cultures

Norway (*Kvande*)

“If you want to be a good parent, or a good father, then you have to take the daddy leave.”

Spain (*Bueno and Oh*)

“If I could afford [part-time unpaid parental leave], I would not mind at all. Of course! But, [my work] is not very flexible. . . , not even with women. I can’t even imagine how they would be with men.”

United States (*Bueno and Oh*)

“A man taking time [family leave]—I don’t know. . . I have never known anybody that has.”

Scotland (*Macht*)

“I work in an entirely male industry. . . So, you can’t gush too much. . . about your children. . . You still have to hide. . . It’s different in the way women and men describe their children [at work].”

Australia (*Borgvist*)

I have never asked for flexible work arrangements for childcare because I do not “want to be seen as someone who tries to get out of doing work.”

Korea (*Bueno and Oh*)

“It is natural to focus on working when you become a father. I will be working harder for my family, for my child, as head of the family.”

South Africa (*Malinga and Ratele*).

“I am supposed to be living with [my children] and their mother, but . . . I have not yet had enough money to get married because of work; I don’t work.”

The chapters in this volume depict how men’s engaged participation in fatherhood is taken for granted in some socioeconomic contexts, constrained by conflicting masculine breadwinner ideals in others, and sometimes even directly obstructed if the men are not strong enough economic providers. A compelling illustration of breadwinning as an obstacle to caregiving is found in Malinga and Ratele’s accounts of day laborers in South Africa who have lost their privileges to a relationship with their children for lack of stable employment. As discussed in Kotelchuck’s chapter on the “Impact of Fatherhood on Men’s Health and Development,” the exclusion of low-income men from engaged fatherhood is also evident in historic U.S. Welfare and Medicaid laws that incentivized mothers to live separately from fathers who could not provide sufficient economic support. In this concluding chapter, we aim to invite cross-sectoral collaboration in the development and implementation of evidence-based strategies for reinforcing fathers’ self-identity and participation as familial caregivers, taking into account cultural and socioeconomic constraints on men’s parenting engagement.

4 Proposed Working Principles for Reducing Barriers to Engaged Fatherhood

In the following sections, we explain our three working principles for overcoming barriers to engaged fatherhood: (1) create individual, non-transferable parenting resources explicitly for fathers, (2) reduce economic conflicts between breadwinning and caregiving, and (3) build supportive social networks for engaged fatherhood. We discuss evidence motivating each working principle and suggest ways in which each could be applied to promote engaged fatherhood in social policy, work practices, and the healthcare system. We offer these working principles as a common point of departure for problem-solving within and across sectors to support and promote engaged fatherhood through institutional and behavioral change.

4.1 *Working Principle #1. Create Individual, Non-Transferable Parenting Resources Explicitly for Fathers*

We start with our boldest principle: that promoting gender equity in parenting requires, at this point in history, the creation of individual, non-transferable parenting resources explicitly for fathers. We use the term “parenting resources” to refer to any forms of economic, educational, and organized social support that enhance mothers’ and fathers’ capacity to effectively care for their child(ren) and be available and responsible for meeting their child(ren)’s needs (as above, following Lamb et al. 1985). Parenting resources include provisions, such as access to family-friendly social or work policies (e.g., paid paternity, maternity, or parental leave; flexible work), parental training and educational materials, parental guidance from medical and developmental experts, or parental support groups.

It might seem more reasonable to start in reverse order with our third working principle—build supportive social networks for engaged fatherhood—so as to enhance men’s sense of belonging and inclusion on the parenting journey. However, one of the most important insights we have gained from the work in this volume is that, at this point in time, welcoming fathers to be engaged parents is insufficient to make most men feel entitled to or capable of being fully engaged parents in the absence of individual, non-transferable paternal parenting resources. Fathers are commonly perceived—and perceive themselves—to be taking up space that belongs to mothers when they seek to play a larger role in their infants’ and children’s care (Allen and Hawkins 1999). For normative and practical reasons, men are expected to devote the bulk of their time and energies to the public sphere in order to collect and contribute resources (e.g., food, money, status) that will protect and sustain their families’ private realm (Morgan 2002; Pleck 2010). Absent specifically designated parenting resources for fathers, the default assumption tends to be that parenting

resources are intended for mothers, and fathers are left ill equipped to play larger parenting roles.

4.1.1 Social Policy

This principle is well supported by research on the conditions that increase men's utilization of their statutory rights to parental leave. In recent decades, natalist social policies, such as exclusive or extended maternal leave, have come to be recognized as "impeding" gender equality (Brighthouse and Wright 2008) because they fuse the caregiving of young children with motherhood and contribute to a perceived and actual distancing of women from paid labor (Gangl and Ziefle 2009; Mandel and Semyonov 2005). However, even when lawmakers have tried to "enable" greater gender equality (Brighthouse and Wright 2008) by introducing policies such as paid "parental" as opposed to "maternal" leave, they tend to observe little effect because mothers are the perceived targets and primary users of resources intended to reduce conflicts between paid work and childcare (Mandel and Semyonov 2005; Moran and Koslowski 2019). As explained in the chapters by Koslowski and O'Brien and by Kvande, what has made a difference in "promoting" gender equality in early parenting (Brighthouse and Wright 2008) has been the creation of parental leave policies that provide an individual, non-transferable entitlement specifically for fathers to participate in infant care (see also, Bartel et al. 2018; Brandth and Kvande 2018; Castro-García and Pazos-Moran 2016; Dearing 2016; Patnaik 2019).

As recounted by Kvande, in 1978, Norway introduced a paid parental leave policy that parents could share. However, few fathers made claim to a portion of this leave. In 1993, Norway introduced a transformational innovation that became known as the "father's quota," a period—initially four weeks long and extended over time—of non-transferable, generously paid parental leave earmarked for fathers. As explained by Kvande, today more than 90 percent of fathers use some or all of their specifically designated leave, while mothers still utilize most of the leave eligible to be shared between parents.

In order to encourage women's workforce participation and to promote gender equity in infant care, many other countries have followed suit (International Network on Leave Policies and Research 2019). Germany, for example, has reduced generous maternal leave policies, introduced parental leave, and created added incentives for fathers' use of leave policies (e.g., two additional months of benefits if utilized by the father) (Erler 2009; Geisler and Kreyenfeld 2019; Reimer et al. 2019). As explained in the chapter by Koslowski and O'Brien, parental leave policies targeting fathers (e.g., "paternity" leave, "daddy month," "father's quota") have spread rapidly around the globe in order to reinforce in principle and practice that men have a role in children's care.

Importantly, evidence suggests that there are more than temporary benefits from policies that boost fathers' participation in early parenting (Patnaik 2019). Cross-national evidence indicates that men's participation in parental leave—particularly longer and more independent participation—contributes in lasting ways to fathers'

involvement in caregiving and other forms of household labor (Bünning 2015; Huerta et al. 2014; Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel 2007; O'Brien and Wall 2017; Patnaik 2019; Petts et al. 2020; Pragg and Knoester 2017; Rehel 2014). In sum, social policy research strongly suggests that individual, non-transferable resources explicitly designated for fathers is a way to “promote” gender equity in parenting, particularly when simply “enabling” fatherhood engagement is not effective (Brighouse and Wright 2008).

4.1.2 Work Practices

In a place like the United States, access to family leave or flexible work arrangements depends overwhelmingly on workplace practices (Kaufman 2020; Koslowski et al. 2019; Petts et al. 2020). But, even when employers offer family-friendly work policies, they are often not utilized by employees—sometimes because they are unaware of them and sometimes because they are hesitant to use them (Beauregard and Henry 2009). As illustrated by the quotes in the textbox, some fathers experience a sense of incongruence between taking family leave and fulfilling their primary responsibilities as breadwinners. Even when fathers would like to be more engaged caregivers, many forego family-friendly work benefits to avoid being stigmatized as a less productive (Leslie et al. 2012), less promising (Bear and Glick 2017), or less committed worker (Petts et al. 2020). In the Nordic countries, one reason why men do not use the shared portion of statutory parental leave is that they are concerned about how they will be viewed by their employers if they negotiate for more than the “father’s quota” (Brandth and Kvande 2016; Närvi and Salmi 2019).

In reviewing literature on family-friendly workplace practices (as opposed to social policies), we uncovered no systematic studies of how variation in the design of parental leave policies offered by private employers affects their utilization, particularly by fathers. However, one recent survey experiment based on a U.S. private employment scenario showed that fathers who took “paternity” leave were perceived as more committed workers than fathers who took “parental” leave (Petts et al. 2020). More broadly, evidence from opinion surveys suggests that American men feel more ambivalent about fathers taking a share of parental leave to which mothers would otherwise be eligible than they do about men taking advantage of individual, father-specific (e.g., “paternity”) leave policies (Petts et al. 2020) and that men strongly support employers offering paid paternity leave (Harrington et al. 2014).

Anecdotal evidence suggests other ways in which employers can offer individual, non-transferable parenting resources specifically for fathers. For instance, AB Volvo created a program for fathers to come together in a safe space to discuss work and family issues (Greenberg and Ladge 2019). American Express established a “fatherhood breakfast series” (Lindzon 2015). Other organizations have created employee resource groups for fathers or in which fathers are explicitly included (e.g., see Dowling 2018 for suggestions). These types of programs recognize fathers’ work-family concerns as legitimate and worthy of problem solving. They also create opportunities for informal information sharing and sensemaking in the formation

of new norms, the importance of which we discuss in relation to our third working principle about building supportive social networks for fatherhood engagement.

We should acknowledge that the evidence is mixed on whether offering family-friendly work practices or other types of parental resources enhances work performance. However, the variation in research findings tends to range between showing no and positive effects (as opposed detrimental implications) on productivity and employee engagement (Beauregard and Henry 2009). A challenge in demonstrating effects of work-life practices on productivity is that they tend to co-exist with better overall management practices (Bloom and Van Reenen 2006). This might help to explain why one study showed that the announcement of work-life initiatives by Fortune 500 firms was associated with increased shareholder returns (Arthur 2003). There is clearer evidence that offering work-life balance practices enhances employee recruitment (Beauregard and Henry 2009). Supporting working fathers is a way for companies to signal to prospective talent their commitment to gender equality and family values.

4.1.3 Healthcare

Whether or not mothers and fathers have access to statutory leave or family-friendly work practices, they are likely to interact with the healthcare system as they travel along their parenting journey (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, and National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2016; World Health Organization 2007, 2020). As emphasized in the healthcare chapters in this volume, obstetric, pediatric, and even primary care providers have important roles to play in encouraging or discouraging engaged fatherhood—from preconception health and reproductive knowledge, attitudes, and behavior (KAB) (Garfield et al. 2016) to perinatal care (Fisher et al. 2018; Garfield 2015) through child development (Yogman, Garfield, and Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health 2016).

Similar to the way that fathers' taking a portion of shared parental leave is often perceived as an encroachment on mothers' time with children, medical attention to men's health and parental roles, especially during the perinatal period, is commonly perceived as sapping precious time and resources from mother and infant. However, as emphasized in the chapters by Yogman and Eppel and by Kotelchuck, this type of zero-sum logic is misguided because there is now overwhelming evidence that positive paternal engagement—and, conversely, the prevention of paternal disengagement—enhances the mental and physical welfare of mothers, the healthy development of children, and the mental and physical welfare of fathers themselves. In other words, paternal inclusion in Maternal Child Health (MCH) and Pediatrics is a win-win, as opposed to zero-sum, proposition.

One compelling example of this is the treatment of paternal depression. There is clear evidence that paternal depression is harmful to children's development (Garfield 2015; Garfield and Fletcher 2011; Ramchandani et al. 2011), both directly (e.g.,

in terms of less reading and more spanking, Davis et al. 2011) and indirectly (i.e., in terms of the toll it takes on the mother and couple's relationship, Gutierrez-Galve et al. 2015). Most pediatricians in the United States recognize the importance of tracking and treating maternal depression for children's welfare (e.g., Heneghan et al. 2007), but attention to paternal depression is much less widespread (Davis et al. 2011; Garfield and Fletcher 2011). Given that the overwhelming majority of U.S. fathers participate at some point in their children's acute-care or well-child pediatric visits (Garfield and Fletcher 2011; Garfield and Isacco 2006), pediatricians have both motive and opportunity to screen fathers specifically for depression and to help them get the services they need—but too few do (Garfield and Fletcher 2011).

Leading health advocates for engaged fatherhood offer numerous suggestions of individual, non-transferable resources that healthcare practices could provide specifically for fathers. These include inserting father-specific items or themes on clinical checklists that involve collecting health, welfare, and medical information from fathers (e.g., depression, family planning, obesity, use of health services) and then sharing with patients the significance of that information for reproductive, family, and child health (see Levy and Kotelchuck in this volume; Yogman et al. 2016). Obstetric practices could go further to develop services specifically for fathers, such as a paternal preconception visit or paternal prenatal consult, but many argue they are not trained to do so (see chapters by Kotelchuck and by Levy and Kotelchuck). Pediatricians and other health professionals can and do offer fathers parental training and education to help them recognize and feel competent in their parenting roles (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, and National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2016), such as bathing or providing skin-to-skin care to a newborn infant (Yogman et al. 2016) or encouraging language development and curiosity and being a role model as children grow (Garfield and Mesman 2016; World Health Organization 2007).

As advocated in the chapters by Levy and Kotelchuck and by Simon and Garfield, more research is required to motivate and inform the development and provision of parenting resources specifically for fathers. There is also a need to develop educational materials and trainings for healthcare service providers—doctors, nurses, and midwives—to help them recognize and advocate for the importance of father involvement during pregnancy, in the perinatal period, and throughout children's development (e.g., see Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs 2009; Fletcher et al. 2008, 2016; Garfield 2015; Garfield et al. 2016; Yogman et al. 2016).

In sum, exclusive associations of perinatal healthcare with mothers and infants, as well as the broader socio-cultural fusing of childcare with mothering, obscure fathers' roles, needs, and potential contributions to maternal and child health and family welfare (Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs 2009; Garfield 2015; Lu et al. 2010; UNICEF 2017; Yogman et al. 2016). To bring fathers out of the margins and into the center of family healthcare and to genuinely “promote”—as opposed to passively “enable” or “impede”—gender equality (Brighouse and Wright

2008), sustained efforts are required to explicitly and specifically include fathers in MCH, obstetric, and pediatric practices.

4.2 Working Principle #2. Reduce Economic Conflicts Between Breadwinning and Caregiving

As discussed in numerous chapters in this book, the traditional and primary normative prescription of fatherhood is to be the family provider. Across socioeconomic and cultural divides, there is a central tension between “cash” and “care” for contemporary fathers (Morgan 2002). The point of this working principle is to highlight that, even if men are provided individual, non-transferable parenting resources explicitly for fathers, they may not be utilized if they are economically out of reach or if grasping for those opportunities undermines or risks their families’ economic welfare.

4.2.1 Social Policy

There are at least three ways in which economic factors influence men’s experience of social policies aimed at fatherhood engagement. The first is eligibility and access. For instance, state-sponsored parenting-related leaves are typically designed for people who are formally and stably employed (Boll et al. 2014; Huerta et al. 2014). This leaves many economically underprivileged workers, such as the precariously employed or underemployed, with little or no access to parenting-related leave benefits (Koslowski and Kadar-Satat 2019; O’Brien 2009).

A second way is in terms of the relative financial benefits or costs of accessing the policy. As discussed by O’Brien and Koslowski in this volume, paid family leave that approximates wage replacement increases uptake by all parents, but by fathers especially. Cross-national comparative studies indicate that men are significantly more likely to utilize statutory parenting-related leave benefits when there is a combination of a “father’s quota” (following Working Principle #1) and a high level of wage replacement benefit (Boll et al. 2014; Karu and Tremblay 2018).

Policies that increase the perceived costs of fatherhood engagement are potentially demotivating. For instance, the U.S. government has sponsored programs, such as Parents’ Fair Share (PFS), that target low-income fathers in custodial arrears. The aim had been to increase men’s economic contributions to their families by providing them with employment services and skills training. Program evaluations of PFS revealed income and parental engagement gains among the most needy cases (i.e., those with the greatest employment barriers and lowest levels of parental involvement). However, evidence suggests that the program’s focus on capturing child support payments alienated many men and encouraged avoidance of formal employment (Knox et al. 2011).

A third economic consideration is mothers' and fathers' relative contributions to household income. Evidence suggests that men's utilization of parental leave hinges in part on the relative income of their domestic partners, such that greater income parity between domestic partners increases paternal leave taking (Moss et al. 2019; Reich 2010). Bueno and Oh's discussion of the case of fathers in Spain is illustrative. They explain that, in contrast to Korea or the United States, many Spanish couples tend toward a more gender-egalitarian division of childcare, but for economic as opposed to ideological reasons: labor market conditions require dual incomes to sustainably support most families.

In this volume, the social policy discussion has focused primarily on parenting-related leaves as a particularly robust area of research on how to support fatherhood engagement. There are obviously other ways in which social policy makers could support fatherhood engagement, such as by expanding healthcare access for fathers or by sponsoring programming to support fatherhood engagement (e.g., father support groups, discussed below). While constricted in scope, the generalizable insights from this research are transparent: any policy intervention designed to support fatherhood engagement needs to take into account its economic feasibility and attractiveness for fathers and their families, including how economic constraints might impede access or effectiveness.

4.2.2 Work Practices

Economic factors also influence men's access to and participation in father-friendly employment policies. In the absence of state-sponsored parental benefits—as is the case in much of the United States (Engeman et al. 2019), a minority of workers have access to paid family leave from their employers (Kaiser Family Foundation 2020; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019). Within the United States, the privileged few fathers who do have access to paid paternity leave through their employers tend to hold more prestigious and higher paid occupations (e.g., professionals, executives) (Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel 2007; Petts et al. 2020) or benefit from union representation (Budd and Brey 2003).

As compared to social policy research, there is less data on how employer leave benefits are remunerated and the effects thereof. Our review of the literature on work and organizations uncovered no systematic studies of the relationship between the economic generosity of employers' family-friendly work policies and their utilization by fathers. One survey of working fathers found that 86 percent of the men reported that they would not take paid family leave offered by their employer unless it covered at least 70% of their salary (Harrington et al. 2014; see also Harrington chapter).

Another economic consideration for working fathers—as well as mothers—is whether accessing family-friendly employment policies could undermine their long-term earning potential. As noted earlier, there is evidence that workers who utilize flexible work practices to resolve work-family conflicts are vulnerable to being stigmatized as less than “ideal workers” (Acker 1990; Bear and Glick 2017; Ladge

et al. 2015; Leslie et al. 2012; Perrigino et al. 2018). One U.S. survey found that hourly workers who lacked union representation were three times more likely than salaried employees to fear losing their jobs and twice as likely to worry about losing seniority if they took family leave (Budd and Brey 2003). Longitudinal studies show that men who take longer paid leaves or time off from paid labor for family reasons tend to have reduced long-term earnings (Coltrane et al. 2013; Rege and Solli 2013), as do women (e.g., Bertrand et al. 2010).

In some professions, such as in law, business, or finance, there are nonlinear, upward sloping payoffs for extreme work devotion (e.g., long hours, high travel, constant availability) (Goldin 2014). In such work contexts, employees must effectively forego income growth if they want more flexible or predictable work arrangements to manage work-family or other work-life conflicts (Goldin and Katz 2011). In her Presidential Address to the American Economic Association, Goldin (2014) argued that what is needed to achieve gender equality in the labor market is a restructuring of jobs and how they are compensated to enhance temporal flexibility:

“What the last [historical] chapter must contain for [the attainment of] gender equality is not a zero-sum game in which women gain and men lose. This matter is not just a woman’s issue. Many workers will benefit from greater flexibility. . . . The rapidly growing sectors of the economy and newer industries and occupations, such as those in health and information technologies, appear to be moving in the direction of more flexibility and greater linearity of earnings with respect to time worked. The last chapter needs other sectors to follow their lead” (p. 1118).

To be inclusive of engaged parents, workplaces need to find integrative solutions to the actual and perceived trade-offs between participating in family-friendly work practices and maintaining one’s productivity and earning potential. The most promising research along this vein suggests moving away from work-family “accommodation” toward problem-solving around “work redesign,” such as using technology-enabled coordination, teaming, or “results only” evaluations to give workers more predictability and control in their schedules (Goldin and Katz 2016; Perlow and Kelly 2014). As discussed in relation to our third working principle (i.e., build supportive social networks for engaged fathers), there are complementary steps that organizational leaders can take to create work cultures that reduce the perceived incongruity between being an engaged father and an “ideal worker” (Humberd et al. 2015).

In sum, the economic factors that influence fathers’ access to and utilization of family-friendly workplace policies appear similar to those we discussed in relation to social policies. Economically privileged fathers (i.e., more skilled, higher income, fully employed) are more likely to have access to family-friendly work policies. Fathers, in general, report less willingness to utilize policies, such as paternity leave, that would substantially reduce their earnings even for short amounts of time. At work, fathers, as well as mothers, also have to consider whether using family-friendly policies could reduce their longer-term earning potential, if doing so might lead them to be perceived as less committed or productive employees. Employers who are serious about promoting gender equality and family values should consider both the immediate economic costs and longer-run career

implications of their employment practices (i.e., how work is structured and who gets promoted, as well as benefits packages) and their work culture (i.e., norms and biases) for working fathers, as well as mothers.

4.2.3 Healthcare

The healthcare sector also has to take economic considerations into account. As discussed in the two chapters by Kotelchuck, socioeconomic factors influence men's mental and physical health, as well as their access to and participation in the healthcare system (Braveman et al. 2011; Marmot et al. 2012). Particularly in healthcare systems that do not provide universal access, such as the United States, reproductive health services are typically only covered for mothers. Thus, any co-participation by fathers in reproductive health services or utilization of fatherhood-related medical or mental health services would not typically be covered by healthcare insurance and, as a result, are economically out of reach for most fathers.

In countries that lack universal healthcare, the inability to cover the costs of father-specific services also constrains healthcare providers. The absence of insurance coverage or other reimbursement for services, such as preconception care or depression testing for fathers, is a disincentive for service providers to address men's health in perinatal care. The data presented in Levy and Kotelchuck's chapter gives voice to men—a majority in their sample—who seek much more involvement in obstetric prenatal care than practitioners typically provide.

Finally, if men accompany their partners for reproductive health services (including delivery) or later pediatric services, they commonly must either take time off from work and forgo pay or utilize sick leave or vacation time—all of which are financial disincentives for fathers' involvement in childcare. Healthcare practices can accommodate working parents by offering flexible or extended office hours (Coleman et al. 2004), providing telehealth options, or posting online resources (Fletcher et al. 2008; Yogman et al. 2016). Service providers can also help address families' economic burdens by ensuring parents are aware of their eligibility for health, social welfare, and work programs and financial (e.g., tax) benefits.

In sum, the direct and indirect economic costs of fatherhood engagement in perinatal and pediatric care create barriers for healthcare providers, as well as fathers. In the absence of institutional mechanisms to pay or reimburse fatherhood-related health services or to support family-related employment absences, men's fatherhood engagement becomes dependent on their current financial abilities to absorb those costs. This leaves healthcare services for fathers primarily within reach of those who have the economic means to access and utilize them, even though those fathers who are less financially able often have some of the greatest needs (see chapter on "Impact of Fatherhood on Men's Health and Development" by Kotelchuck).

4.3 Working Principle #3: Build Supportive Social Networks for Engaged Fatherhood

In order to challenge default assumptions that childcare is about mothering, our first working principle was aimed at creating individual, non-transferable parental resources explicitly for fathers. Our second principle recognizes that, even if fathers are granted specifically designated parenting resources, they require the current economic resources and income potential to take advantage of such opportunities. We now turn to our third working principle: to build supportive social networks for engaged fatherhood. This principle stems from evidence on the influence of interpersonal relationships on fathers' propensity to take opportunities for engaged parenting.

We have put this principle last, even though being inclusive and encouraging of fatherhood engagement would seem to many like the obvious starting point. A critical insight we gained from the research reviewed for this volume is that the marginal value of additional social support is much greater once our first two working principles have been met than before. Starting with social support risks falling into the trap of "enabling" gender equality in parenting without actually "promoting" it (Brighouse and Wright 2008). It also contributes to the common misunderstanding that men are not interested in being engaged fathers if they do not participate when welcomed. Welcoming men to be engaged fathers is less meaningful if men feel ill equipped to participate as parents (Working Principle #1) or, if doing so, would come at an unacceptable economic cost for themselves or their families (Working Principle #2). However, as discussed in this section, once fathers have the resources and economic capacity, social support is critical to helping them overcome cultural barriers to embracing their caregiver roles.

4.3.1 Social Policy

A study of middle-class immigrant fathers in Norway illustrates how a lack of social support from friends and family can inhibit fathers from accessing even well-compensated father-specific statutory leave benefits. Kvande and Brandth (2017) interviewed immigrant men in professional positions about their experience with Norway's "father's quota." In one illustrative case, an Italian father living in Norway recounted the teasing he received when describing to his home-country peers his plans to take paid leave after the birth of his child:

"It was a bit like I felt bullied by friends. . . It was like absurd that I was taking leave. In Italian it is called *maternita* [maternity leave], so it was like 'Ha, ha, ha, are you taking *maternita*?' . . . Not really serious bullying, but it felt a little bit like it" (p. 29).

He continued on to explain how older family members watched him with amusement when he participated in childcare (e.g., changing diapers). Kvande and Brandth (2017) explored how some immigrant men struggled to reconcile parenting attitudes

within their home-country social networks with the more progressive Norwegian norms.

Conversely, another Norwegian study by a team of economists demonstrated how peer effects contributed to the growth in men's participation in parenting-related leaves after the government introduced a full month of paid paternity leave in 1993. Dahl et al. (2014) showed that having either an eligible brother or a co-worker take paternity leave significantly increased new fathers' take-up of the newly introduced paternity leave policy. These "peer effects" were even stronger in less secure employment contexts (e.g., weaker unionization, private vs. public sector, higher turnover) and for senior managers from whom extra work devotion is typically expected.

Another illustration of this principle is the formation of father support groups. For example, the Supporting Father Involvement study, a government-sponsored randomized control trial to foster responsible fatherhood among low-income families in agricultural centers of the United States, demonstrated significant and lasting positive effects of peer support groups for fathers and of co-parenting support groups for couples on fathers' involvement with their children and on children's subsequent avoidance of problem behaviors. Fathers in the couples group also reported decreased relational stress with mothers and more stable partnerships over time (compared to peer-support or control groups) (Knox et al. 2011).

As argued by Dahl et al. (2014), close workplace and family networks are important social spaces for information sharing and sensemaking and may be especially influential in relation to gender-role adaptations. Social policy makers would be well advised to consider how patterns of social interaction and, potentially, other sources of role modeling (e.g., by public figures) could influence fatherhood engagement. As emphasized in the chapters by Simon and Garfield and by Levy and Kotelchuck, the fact that fathers are rarely even surveyed for their perspectives is evidence of missing links in social networks that could support fatherhood engagement and of lost opportunities for policy makers to learn from and influence fathers' behavior and perspectives.

In sum, social policy makers could enhance the effectiveness of their programming if they were able to build social support networks that encourage fathers' participation, particularly among close peers and family members. Moreover, the creation and tracking of social support networks for fathers is likely to be a valuable channel for information exchange, both to keep fathers informed and educated and to collect data for program evaluation, policy design, and knowledge development.

4.3.2 Work Practices

Workplaces are among the most influential social environments shaping men's perceptions of and capacity for fatherhood engagement. As discussed by Ladge and Humberd in this volume, "ideal workers" are commonly cast from a masculine stereotypic mold of employees whose primary responsibility is paid labor (Acker 1990)—the archetypal "organization man" (Ladge et al. 2015). In the United States,

where there is no statutory right to paid leave, studies suggest that men who are open about balancing their work and family devotions are vulnerable to “not man enough” harassment and other forms of social backlash for their failure to conform to traditional gender norms (Berdahl and Moon 2013; Rudman and Mescher 2013; Thébaud and Pedulla 2016; Vandello et al. 2013). As discussed by Koslowski and O’Brien, fathers in countries with statutory rights to remunerated leave commonly report a sense of unease about being perceived as putting caregiving ahead of paid work even for short amounts of time and especially when they are in senior management roles (Brandth and Kvande 2002; Koslowski and Kadar-Satat 2019; Moran and Koslowski 2019; Närvi and Salmi 2019; Tanquerel and Grau-Grau 2020).

As discussed above, more elite workers tend to have more economic security, as well as employment privileges, to balance work-family conflicts. However, they often suffer a paradoxical tension between having a wealth of resources to manage work-family conflicts and constrained ability to deploy those resources if they want to maintain their elite status (Allard et al. 2007; Kelly et al. 2010; Shows and Gerstel 2009; Williams 2010). This dynamic is explored in the chapter by Tanquerel for which she interviewed French working-class and professional fathers. Professional men in her sample tended to characterize family issues as a “private matter” about which, one of her interviewees explained, “nobody cared, nobody wanted to hear” (insert page). In contrast, the working-class men Tanquerel interviewed reported more open discussions with their managers about taking statutory paternity leave or managing other work-family conflicts (cf. Williams 2010 on class and working fatherhood in the United States).

As discussed in the chapter by Bueno and Oh, it is not only cultural conceptions of gender, but also the culture of work, that influences men’s choices to be engaged fathers. For instance, in Korea or Japan, the gendered division of household labor (i.e., women as caregivers and men as breadwinners) is reinforced by national work cultures that demand extreme work devotion (e.g., long and inflexible work hours). Being an engaged parent is unreconcilable with being a devoted employee, for women as well as men (Brinton and Mun 2016; Brinton and Oh 2019). Demanding work structures and cultures rely on the segregation of “cash-making” and “care-giving” (Goldin 2014; Padavic et al. 2020; Slaughter 2015).

A growing body of evidence suggests that the propensity of working dads to invest time and energy in engaged fatherhood is significantly influenced by the perceived supportiveness of their work environment, particularly their supervising managers (Humberd et al. 2015; Moran and Koslowski 2019; Petts et al. 2020; Stropnik et al. 2019; Tanquerel and Grau-Grau 2020). Within this volume, Bosch and Las Heras report evidence that Latin American fathers’ propensity to participate in family life (e.g., eat dinner at home) depends on the extent to which they benefit from Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors (FSSBs) (e.g., managers who role model work-family balance). Other investigations of how men navigate fathering identities at work have similarly concluded that direct managers play a key role in encouraging and enabling working fathers’ involvement in their children’s lives (Humberd et al. 2015; Ladge et al. 2015).

The provision of family-friendly work policies in itself is insufficient if workers lack information or social support within their workplaces to utilize them (Beauregard and Henry 2009; Kelly and Kalev 2006). Policies to promote gender equality and work-family integration are more likely to be effective if organizational leaders and managers act as role models and partners in information sharing and problem-solving around potential work-family conflicts. For example, Accenture, a large professional services firm, reported a three-fold increase in men's participation in paid parental leave between 2016 and 2019. Consistent with our first two working principles, this achievement followed the introduction of a fully paid parental leave policy for "all permanent full-time and part-time employees of all gender identities." However, professionals in the firm also credited "seeing other dads"—including senior leaders in the firm—as an important factor in normalizing utilization of the new leave policy (Women's Agenda 2020). As suggested above for policy makers, organizational leaders should consider how interpersonal support networks within their organizations shape fathers' perceptions and use of opportunities for work-family integration.

4.3.3 Healthcare

New parents especially look to healthcare providers for guidance and affirmation, and medical service providers should be aware that how they interact with fathers may tacitly convey a message—intended or not—about their positive or negative perceptions of fathers' status as parents. As suggested in the chapter by Levy and Kotelchuck, there are meaningful social gestures that medical professionals and staff can make to be inclusive of fathers from the beginning of pregnancy—or, alternatively, to reinforce traditionally gendered parenting roles. To reinforce men's parental status, they can make a habit of addressing fathers directly and welcoming them explicitly into the process of prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal care—traditionally maternal-only spheres of health services. Healthcare providers can enhance fathers' sense of belonging by displaying inclusive imagery of fathers in their offices, on websites, and in other communications.

Active outreach to fathers by healthcare professionals is especially important for potentially marginalized fathers and their families (World Health Organization 2007; Yogman et al. 2016). For instance, Moore and Kotelchuck (2004) found Black urban fathers in the United States were more likely to feel uncomfortable participating in pediatric visits and less likely to do so when their families had no health insurance (a traditional fatherhood responsibility). Fathers suffering socioeconomic strains may be among those whose families would benefit most from trusting, supportive relationships with healthcare providers.

Pediatricians have a distinctive role to play in overcoming the perpetuation of stereotypes of fathers as incompetent caregivers (Garfield and Isacco 2006), which demotivate fathers themselves and thinly justify gendered gatekeeping between the public realm of paid labor and private realm of familial care (Allen and Hawkins 1999; Doucet 2009; Zvara et al. 2013). The overwhelming majority of fathers

participate at some point in their children's well visits or critical care (Garfield and Fletcher 2011; Garfield and Isacco 2006). These touchpoints give pediatricians opportunities to help fathers develop their sense of confidence and identity as engaged parents. For instance, they can emphasize to fathers and their parenting partners the importance of giving fathers time with primary responsibility for infant care (Yogman et al. 2016; see also chapters on "The Role of Fathers in Child and Family Health" and "Impact of Fatherhood on Men's Health and Development" by Yogman and Eppel and by Kotelchuck, respectively) or highlight their important roles in adolescent development (Lucey and Garfield 2019).

Some pediatricians have created new father support groups that help men to collectively recognize their common experiences and concerns and be a locus for new practical skill development and enhanced paternal confidence (Spain 2018). Other healthcare professionals and community groups have designed fatherhood support programs, such as The Healthy Start Program or The Fatherhood Project, that similarly help men support one another, gain new skills and knowledge, and strengthen their sense of paternal identity, including overcoming traditionalist prejudices as well as addressing practical, psychosocial, and economic barriers to becoming more engaged fathers (Harris and Brott 2018; Levy et al. 2012). The success of these programs and others, such as the Supporting Father Involvement study (referenced above), suggest that fatherhood support groups may be an underutilized resource, especially for improving the health and welfare of families burdened by challenging socioeconomic circumstances (Baumgartner et al. 2020; Lu et al. 2010; see also Kotelchuck chapter on "Impact of Fatherhood on Men's Health and Development").

In sum, healthcare professionals have enormous potential to be influential contributors to the social support networks for engaged fatherhood, particularly for first-time parents. They should recognize that their interpersonal interactions are influential opportunities to share information and shape perceptions about engaged fatherhood. Beyond interactions within the healthcare system itself, healthcare providers have a role to play in creating and sustaining spaces for fathers to develop supportive relationships with peers to sympathize, encourage, and problem-solve with one another.

5 Closing

In this concluding chapter, we have proposed three working principles that would not have been transparent without the insights we gained from our collaboration on the Experts Meeting and this edited volume. Our first two principles—(1) create individual, non-transferable parenting resources explicitly for fathers and (2) reduce economic conflicts between breadwinning and caregiving—reflect core findings in social policy. The cross-disciplinary and cross-national sharing of ideas and perspectives at the conference and the subsequent editing of the volume helped us to

recognize the central relevance of these principles for workplace and healthcare practices.

Our third principle—(3) build supportive social networks for engaged fatherhood—is the first we all espoused. However, it was only through deeper reflection that we realized its limitations absent attention to the preceding principles. Moreover, we came to see that the importance of social support comes more sharply into focus when one recognizes that our first two principles are necessary, but still insufficient, if men perceive those close to them as dismissive of or resistant to their fatherhood engagement. We offer these working principles as a preliminary basis for analyzing the barriers to engaged fatherhood and for generating policies and behavioral interventions to promote gender equity in parenting.

We hope that the evidence presented in this book has made a compelling case for reducing the barriers to engaged fatherhood—for men, for families, and for gender equality. We offer this summary of evidence and our working principles at a time in history when many believe the revolution toward gender equality is in need of a push forward (England 2010) and when a growing number of people are recognizing that deepening men's engagement in care and women's in paid labor would strengthen both our families and our economies. The motivation for this work has been to put our shoulders to the wheel in support of these dual purposes.

5.1 Looking Forward

We started with a conversation among fatherhood experts from the social policy, work and organization, and health fields. Unclear exactly what we would grasp from one another, we were nonetheless highly curious about what novel insights might be gained and transferable across the sectors. We were uniformly delighted with how much we had to learn by sharing our distinctive vantage points on fatherhood engagement. Indeed, this collaboration has left us more hungry than satisfied by our potential for cross-disciplinary and cross-national collaboration. As we close this chapter, we are eager to pursue new research informed by this endeavor and to bring more viewpoints into the conversation.

In future rounds of this conversation, we aspire to invite more direct conversation with policy makers and organizational leaders. We would also like to invite more of our colleagues from professional schools (e.g., graduate schools of education) and from the social sciences, particularly political science, psychology, and sociology, in order to fill out missing perspectives and to refine and elaborate our working principles for collaborative action. Completing this volume, we are aware that we have barely scratched the surface of how important factors, such as socioeconomic status, moderate the barriers to fatherhood engagement. We have not delved into the implications of systemic racism, mass incarceration, or other forms of social and economic marginalization. We have focused primarily on the benefits of constructive and gender-equitable parenting engagement and recognize the need to shine more light on the darker margins of abusive fatherhood, patriarchal forms of

fatherhood identity, and toxic masculinities. While we have tried to define fathers in inclusive terms, we have written this book from a predominately heteronormative perspective. Any expansion of this conversation should more explicitly consider a diversity of family structures and the limits and extensions of the work to people with queer, non-binary, or transgender identities. Finally, we are writing the final pages of this book in a period of potentially historic transformations at the intersections of work and family due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and we are all impatient to learn about how families are coping and what will be the lasting implications for work and gender equality.

In sum, we are closing this book with a deep sense of gratitude for all we have learned from our fellow contributors and with enthusiasm to join more companions in the work to promote fatherhood engagement for the welfare of men and for the strengthening of families and economic productivity through increased gender equality.

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